

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2013 UPDATE WORK PROGRAM

It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Plan update process will create a mostly new growth strategy and long-range development framework. Since the high rate of growth anticipated and planned for in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update came to an abrupt halt not long after Plan adoption, there has been little change to the local landscape since. Similarly, the technical information – land for urban growth and capacity to provide urban services needed for growth – has changed little as well. If anything, the City's plans provide for much more growth than is likely under the new economic realities of 2012. At the technical level, existing information, include past environmental reviews, will serve the citizen participation process well.

1. Organization / Work Program:

The Organization / Work Program Phase prepares the community and City for the great task of shaping a future with a deliberate plan. The principal tasks are:

- Create a Work Program that identifies the major steps or *phases* of the planning process, identifies the roles and relationships among the participants in the process, proposes a timeline for program execution, specifies the major technical tasks, and describes the products of each phase.
- Prepare a Public Participation Program that describes the methods and opportunities for early, open and continuous citizen participation.
- Activate the staff resources and program committees required for program facilitation, support, and monitoring.

2. Vision/Scoping:

Public participation activities begin with a visioning process in which the public is invited to broadly define the desired community future through expression of personal and perceived community values. The basis for this activity is the Vision originally adopted in the 1996 Plan and carried forward in the 2006 Plan update. This Vision presents a contrast of seemingly opposing futures (- in italics below -) and little else to provide direction for long-term growth and development:

Sequim will be the center of financial, commercial, retail, cultural, educational, recreational and medical services and activities ***on the northern Olympic Peninsula***, while maintaining its ***friendly small town and rural atmosphere***.

Part of the vision phase objective will be to understand the values inherent to being the center of a major region and those inherent to the qualities of a friendly small town and rural place – and to resolve them in ways that translate to complementary directions in community development. Scoping will help refine the range of topics and level of specificity in the new plan – helping to set the Vision at the level of individual citizens'

experience and meaning. Although community visions reflect a balancing of a wide range of individual and shared interests, they must be meaningful enough to pose a distinctive growth future and provide a basis for subsequent phases of the process.

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee is charged with insuring that the vision phase satisfies the criteria of a *meaningful* and *distinctive* future that represents what was expressed through public participation. The Planning Commission's role is to evaluate the new draft vision as a foundation of a specific growth future and make a recommendation to the City Council. The Council then approves the updated vision before the process proceeds to the next phase.

3. Growth Alternatives

SEPA requires that the City prepare at least two growth alternatives as a part of the planning process – one based on “current patterns” that serves both as an option and as a baseline for comparison, and one or more that offer contrasting directions for growth and development. The Growth Alternatives phase is guided by the Vision prepared in the prior phase, but each alternative will reflect varying degrees of responsiveness to the Vision. For example, if the Vision expresses a different future than the path the city has been following, then the “current patterns” alternative will not likely come as close to meeting that new expectation as the other alternative(s).

Crafting alternatives is one of the most critical steps in the planning process. This is the point at which discrete choices are largely framed. The public plays the key role in translating the Vision expectations into drawings, sketches, and maps that communicate differing growth/development scenarios. If the Vision speaks of “walkable neighborhoods with access to daily goods and services,” where and how can that be satisfied as the community grows?

During the preparation of a new Downtown Plan in 2011, a similar process need was fulfilled with a series of “charrette” activities conducted at walk-in, storefront space in the center of Downtown. A charrette is a highly-graphic exercise that is conducive to citizen input, and the maps and other graphics produced are effective tools to communicate how the community will achieve its values under differing growth frameworks. The mapping is presented as schematic representations of growth/development patterns, not literal depictions of specific futures. Each alternative is flushed out in greater detail in subsequent phases of the process as policies are drafted and SEPA analysis continues.

The Growth Alternative charrette is programmed over a long day or weekend in a central location, possibly the Transit Center.

4. Draft Goals and Policies for Growth and Direction (“Capacity” Topics):

Goals and policies are the “bridge” between the Vision and the growth plan that directs the City's physical and functional development. Some of the mandated elements of a comprehensive plan are specifically related to community growth and development: Land Use, Transportation, Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Parks and Recreation. These

represent the most determinant components that direct the quantity and form of community growth. In Phase 3, the focus is on drafting goals and policies that combine the functional relationships among land use patterns, transportation systems, public service costs, revenue forecasts, and environmental consequence as a representation of the community's "capacity for growth."

Citizens involved in this Phase will not be challenged to actually draft goals and policies but rather to express opinions and values about the quantity, form and character of growth. The staff will translate these into draft goals and policies consistent with furthering the Vision and will present these for public response.

5. Draft Goals and Policies That Address "Non-Capacity" Topics:

The "Non-Capacity" plan topics include Housing, Economic Development, Shorelines, and optional or elective elements that the community chooses to include in the Vision / Scoping Phase. These topics are strongly related to the Capacity topics to make a complete proposal for a growth future and the approach for citizen involvement and staff production for drafting goals and policies is the same as Phase 3.

6. Evaluation of Plan Alternatives:

The process will generate at least two alternative growth futures to compare/contrast for selection. One alternative is the "no change to current patterns and behaviors" and provides a base-line of what citizens know and experience today, and the existing Plan that guides development, as a model for the future. At least one contrasting alternative will present a differing direction based on changed conditions and new expectations as reflected in the updated Vision.

The Evaluation of Alternatives Phase is largely a technical assessment of the responsiveness of each alternative to the Vision, goals and policies, and underlying capacities to grow and serve.

7. Selection of Preferred Alternative and Adoption:

Citizens will actively participate in the selection of a Preferred Alternative based on the Evaluation in Phase 5. and their individual opinion on how well each alternative performs for the growth future they prefer. The selection Phase will start with a series of general public meetings at central venues such as the Transit Center. These responses will be presented for additional comment at a regular Planning Commission public meeting, and the Commission will make a recommendation to the Council after taking input and conducting its own review. Finally, the City Council will hold a public hearing on the Commission's recommendation prior to taking any action for plan adoption, providing one additional opportunity for public review and comment.